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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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[Redacted]

COUNTRY	USSR (Yakutsk ASSR)	REPORT NO.	[Redacted]	50X1
SUBJECT	Gold-Ore-Processing Plant at Lebedinyy	DATE DISTR.	22 April 1955	
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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

[Redacted]	50X1
[Redacted]	50X1
[Redacted]	50X1

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STATE	#X	ARMY	#X	NAVY	#X	AIR	#X	FBI	#	AEC		ORR Ev	X		
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REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

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COUNTRY USSR (Yakutsk ASSR)

DATE DISTR. 28 Mar. 1955

SUBJECT Gold-Ore-Processing Plant at Lebedinyy

NO. OF PAGES 4

DATE OF INFORMATION [REDACTED]

REFERENCES: [REDACTED]

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PLACE ACQUIRED [REDACTED]

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

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1. The Gold-Ore-Processing Plant (zobogatitel'naya Fabrika) [REDACTED] in 1951, was located at Lebedinyy (N 58-29, E 125-31), approximately 12 miles southeast of Aldan, Yakutsk ASSR. It was about 10 kilometers east of the Amuro-Yakutskaya Magistral (Amur-Yakutsk Highway) which led south from Aldan (N 58-37, E 125-24). Gold-bearing ore was brought to the factory via dirt road from nearby mines. 50X1
2. [REDACTED] the plant to be about 50 meters high, and not more than 100 meters long or 100 meters wide. It was surrounded by a three-meter-high wooden fence with three rows of electrified barbed wire on top. There was a forbidden zone two-meters wide on either side of the fence. Along the fence at intervals there were several towers with a guard in each one. At night the fence was lighted with electric lights. Entrance to the factory was through a gate where there was a sentry box for the captain of the guard. His job was to check the entry cards for individuals entering the factory and to supervise the activities of the other guards. The entry cards were issued by the First Secret Section of the MVD of the Lebedinyy Mining settlement. The plant was administered by the MVD. 50X1
3. The labor force at the factory consisted of 240 free workers. They worked in three eight-hour shifts of 80 men each. All workers had the right to wear the regular green uniform of a miner with the miners' cap but few did because of the expense: 1,200 rubles.
4. Prior to March 1950, workers in the various gold-ore-processing plants in the Aldan area were paid in gold rubles, just as the gold miners were. The value of the gold ruble varied from 20 Soviet rubles to the gold ruble to 4.90 Soviet rubles to the gold ruble. After March 1950, however, everybody was paid in regular Soviet rubles.
5. Most ore processing in the plant was accomplished manually. Upon first arriving at the factory, each truck with its cargo was weighed, after which the truck went up a ramp and dumped the ore into one or two funneled bunkers. Under each of these bunkers were three identical circular tanks in which the ore was crushed and mixed with water, thus converting the ore into heavy liquid. The liquid flowed out of the tanks through open tubes (sholoby) into three separate troughs (kolody), inclined at a 40° angle. During the passage from tank to trough, mercury (rtut) was added to the liquid to separate the gold from the rest of the ore. The troughs were made of wood and were 30 to 40 meters long, 50 centimeters high, and 70 centimeters wide (see Sketch No. 1 on page 4.) The bottom of the troughs were covered by 50 to 60 rectangular mats, each 60 to 70 centimeters long. They were made of dried seaweed or rubber.

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6. On top of the mats, the troughs were divided into two parts: five or six rows of stencils (trafarety) (see Sketch No. 2 on page 4), one on top of the other, extended over nearly one-fourth of the trough while a series of overlapping wire mesh screens (grokhota) occupied approximately three-fourths of the trough. From above, the trafarety looked something like a honeycomb, the cells of which were eight centimeters in diameter and which were formed by steel strips five centimeters high and five millimeters thick. These cells caught the larger, heavier pieces of gold-mercury mixture. Each trafarety itself weighed between 17 and 20 kilograms. The grokhota overlapped each other end to end from the trafarety to the end of the trough.
7. Both the large particles of gold-mercury mixture which went through the trafarety and the smaller particles which strained through the grokhota ended up on the special mats covering the entire floor of the troughs. Every 24 hours, the processing of ore through the troughs was stopped and the mats were washed with streams of water to loosen the particles of gold-mercury mixture. The particles were then raked off the mats and placed in pails, specially sealed by members of the First Secret MVD Section (Pervyy Sekretnyy Otdel). The last process was called the cleaning out of the koloda (syemka kolodi). The pails were next carried to the washing room (vashgurmnaya komnata), where the various impurities were removed from the gold-mercury mixture by a method unknown to source. The final step of gold processing in the Lebediny Plant consisted of placing the mixture on sodops (sovki) and injecting it into ovens with temperatures of up to 1000 Centigrade. This process evaporated the mercury and left pure gold, which was later shaped into bars (slitki).
8. After processing, the gold was never kept at the factory for more than eight hours but was transferred in leather sacks by truck under armed guard to the Central Finance Office (Tsentral'naya Kassa) of the gold mine. It was weighed there before being shipped to Aldan for further transshipment. There were two Special Communications guards (Spetsvyaz)² armed with submachine guns on each truck. They were dressed like ordinary Soviet soldiers without MVD epaulets, but source believed they were MVD troops.
9. Following is a list and description of jobs and functions at the Lebediny Plant. Much of this information was based on hearsay.

Job Title	Function
Unknown.	Control of the flow of unprocessed ore from the bunkers to underlying crushers.
<u>Butorshchik</u>	Assured an uninterrupted flow of ore through the trough. He did this with the help of one woman water controller (<u>vakhtova</u>) and washer (<u>promyvalshchik</u>).
Water Controller (<u>Vakhta</u>)	Upon orders from the <u>butorshchik</u> this woman increased or decreased the supply of water in the trough by an electric signal.
Washer (<u>Promyvalshchik</u>)	The <u>butorshchik</u> and washer worked together. When the flow of ore was stopped every 24 hours, they raised the <u>trafarety</u> and <u>grokhota</u> and raked the gold-mercury particles, afterwards placing them in special pails.

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10. [redacted] the gold mines of the Lebediny complex [redacted] were 60 to 70 meters deep. The ore in these mines was loosened by hand drill and carried on wheelbarrows to wooden plank elevators which hauled the ore to the surface. The majority of the workers in the mines, as opposed to those in the factory, was forced labor.

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1.  Comment:  It is not clear at what date the gold ruble was worth 20 Soviet rubles. However, in 1949 the rate was 9.60 to 1; in 1950 4.90 to 1.
2.  Comment:  the term spetsyvas but did not know what it meant.

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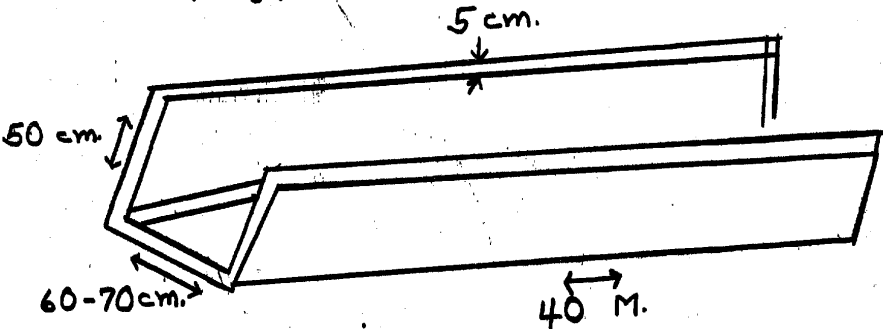
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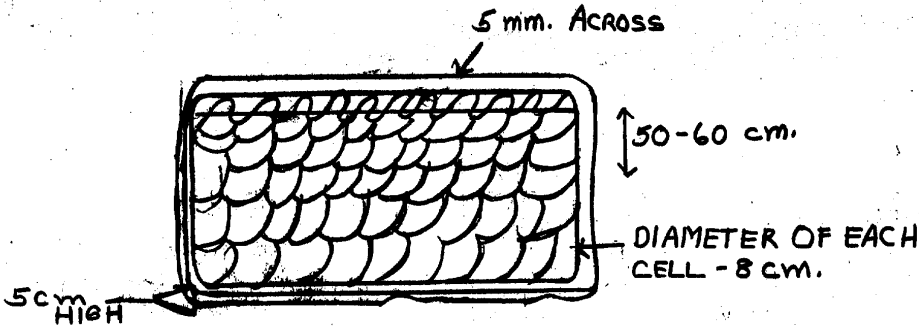
Sketch No. 1

Rough Drawing Corresponding to Source's Description
of a Koloda (Trough)



Sketch No. 2

Rough Drawing Corresponding to Source's
Description of Tafarety (stencils)



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